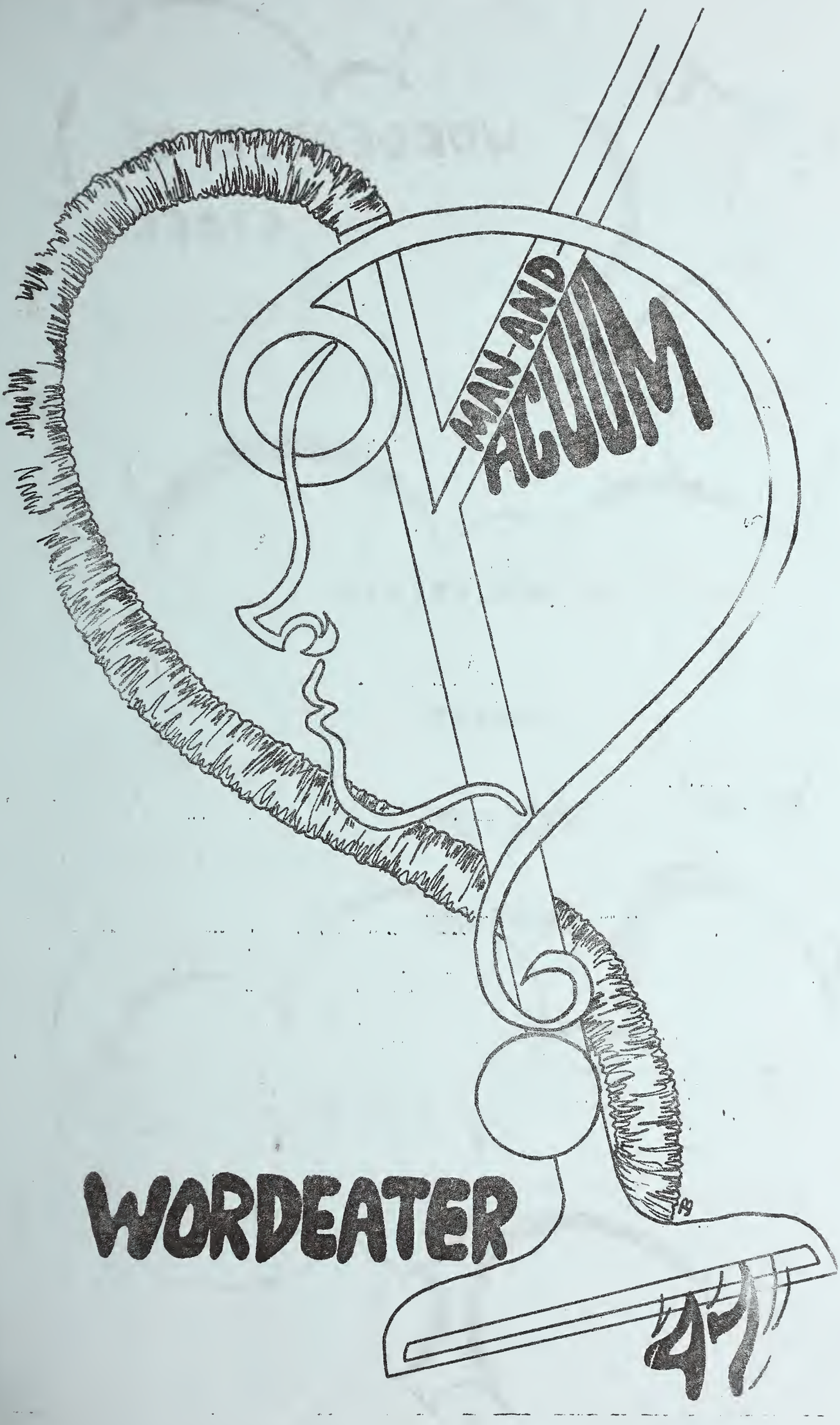
MAN-AND
WORDEATER
47

WORDEATER 47

STAFF

Linda Baker
Judy Belfield
John Bertoletti
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Shelbia Chandler
John Stobart

To get a submission printed in this issue, four of the six people at the right had to vote for acceptance. For the award winners, only John Stobart is responsible.

AWARDS

PROSE

* $25 to John Bertoletti

POETRY

* No Poetry Prize this issue

COVERS

* $20 to Judy Belfield

Manuscripts or cover designs for WORDEATER 49 must be submitted to John Stobart in room C-1069 by:

September 21, 1984

Manuscripts will not be returned and SHOULD BE TYPED.

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NEXT TWO DEADLINES:
September 21, 1984
November 21, 1984

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John Bertoletti

JUCO GIRLS

High heels and tight jeans, hair and collars up.
Chests out, tummies in, always shake the butt.
Bright earrings, shiny belts, coordinated suits.
Gold chains, heavy makeup, knee-high go-go boots.
Walk the halls, strut your stuff, never saying hi.
I'd really like to talk but you just keep on walking by.

****

Marguerite Flanigan

A RIDICULOUS CIRCUS

Jumping up and down with glee
The elephant lost his cool
An ice cream cone stuck on his knee
Then flipped up to the top of his stool.

The circus band played Christmas carols
The ringmaster stood on his head
No clown was silly or smiling at all
And popcorn was green and red.

"What a trick!" said the trainer
"You're one in a million"
When the monkey
Stood on his nose.

"It's nothing," he said
As he slipped off his clothes
And brushed his teeth
With the tip of his toes.

****

John Q. Public

I'M NO DANCER

Strobe lights glisten
On my empty beer bottles
Dande floor is hot
But my willpower is not
I need something to respond inside
A reason to act
Because it sure would hurt me
To watche that robot with the hair
Dance right over my pride
My baby, the one I just met
Is scoping and measuring the floor
Wondering if there is room for her
In the swarm
Whatever I say will have to wait
Her thoughts are of motion
And if I think about it too much
My beer will be warm
Maybe I justdon't belong out here
Because I'm no dancer
I'm more of a backstreet prancer
And I'll take my chances
As the music changes
And the crowd rearranges
I'll hit that floor
After I down a few more
Althought it may be head first
The smiling faces are just a blur
I thin my wallet to find the cure
Atmosphere is one of confusion
I think of where I'd rather be
Stranger on the floor
She's picturing me next to her
Danger in the form of another pitcher
I'm weaving for the back door
Even thought my cowboy boots are clean
I just can't seem to dig this scene
There's my ex-girl, the one I met
Before someone put a token
In the smoke machine
She's not alone
The music is fast but they are dancing slow
A dance floor dyke with perfect hair
Could I approach her
Or would I be looking for trouble?
Someone calls my name, awake in a sweat
It's so hard for me to remember
When all I can do is forget
And it's not the last time I've lost my way
A dancer I may not be but I'm looking for love
And you can find me there every Daturday

****

Sue Sturgeon

TO STING

To Sting:

You can arrest me anytime.

****

Pat Roemer

THE CAUSE OF ILIZOLOT GOODOER

"exceptional citizens, exceptional cause.
Together we will find a way to right the
night, undo the done, save those who
need it and those who don't. Recruit
those who don't know they don't know
and purge the world of those that know
they don't know. There is apple pie in
an octagon cosmos and we will find it.
The way out. Tunnelvision in cinemascope.
We'll be the stars of the show,"
expounds the spittle-mouthed pulpiteer.
"Hoorah, hoopla, ra-ra-ra,"
whoops the eager mob.
A trenchmouth soothsayer bangs up the band.
Spaghetti-confetti flitter and fly
will all the pop-gun trimmings.
Everyone dances the rhumba.
Delirium prevails.
He waits.
Simmering, thickening the preposterous plot,
abscessed ends, veiled by a shroud
of good intention.
He stirs and strews
and waits,
to spoon-feed those who eat spinach, liver
and unleavened bread.
Illusion, delusion, chameleon ideals
fetched from farther fetched than fantasy.
They will swallow-gulp it whole.
He knows and licks his chops.
This self.
Slips behind the mask of inspiration
straddles a sleep-strong virtue-fed stallion
and thunders through their braincoils.
Ear to ear shouting, "God save us all."
Sitting slack astride the steed
He coolly views the clientele.
An orgasmic-frenzied-organism,
hungry.
He knows--
The time is right for gumbo and bitters.
He coyly slides off virtue.
The believers stare in awed silence.
His self-styled gold-leafed face
fixed firmly with a plasticine smile.
matter of factly commands
attention
to the matters of fact.
that will become
matter of fact.

****

Jean Tyrell

LAUNDRYMAT BLUES

The Alaskan winter creeps into damp
clothes
that can't repel the smell of smoke
from the cigarette-smoker, who
leans on his machine.

The tinny clatter of metal snaps
on the side of the dryer, keeps
disjointed time to the country music,
hardly audible
except in base keys.

Over the machines,
which solidly sit, churning inside,
loads of weighty dampness.

A far-away friend comes to mind.
Unwritten thoughts, edged with loneliness, are inaudibly mumbled, next to spinning washers, and tumbling dryers that can't churn away the blues.
Reminded of life's condition, and pitying the friend, who can't have the blues
any worse--
than me.

****

Linda Schweitzer

SOCIETY'S HANGUP

Hush your voice and turn up
the radio.
Close the windows and pull the
shades, we must'nt let the
neighbors hear.
They're all listening, you know,
hoping to get an earful of dirty
laundry to hang on the line
along with their own.

****

Judy Belfield

CASE #1018

A synapse lapse
perhaps
or chemica- impropriety--
something firing wrong
we cannot say for certain.
Could be hormones
jangled or lacking or oversupplied.
In any event
the behavior is off-center,
a little awry--
astray, shall we say.
A pity for sure
in one so young.
Not a tregedy though--
these things can be fixed . . .
unless they get worse.

****

Shelbia Chandler

I SHOULD'VE LEARNED

I should've learned my lesson long ago
I should've learned then, but now I know
I ain't gonna fall in love no more
I won't be hurt like I was before
I didn't know then, but I do know now
And I won't let it happen, no way, no how

You promised me everything
You promise it all
It sounds good, baby
But I ain't gonna fall.
You say so much
And it sounds so fine
But how can I be sure
That you'll really be mine

I've been hurt so many times before
So I've made up my mind
I'll hold on to my heart no matter what.
No, I won't be hurt this time.

****

John Bertoletti

WASTE WORLD

A beer for me.
A bong for you.
We're both messed up.
We love it, too.

It's so much fun
to be a drunk
to smoke a bud
or snort a lump.

So shoot me up,
cut me a line,
get me a beer,
I feel fine.

I'm gonna waste
my life away.
I'm gonna get
messed up all day.

****

Linda Schweitzer

MIND BATTLES

The little neighbor boys are playing army again. I can hear their imaginary bombs exploding and their vocalized machine guns killing each other. They each fall to the ground, barely escaping the enemies' bullets.

Aren't we all fighting a war? Our cold stares pierce like daggers, our dead silences deafen like the explosion of bombs. We shine our shoes often, keeping up a false front for all the world to inspect.

Won't someone call a cease to the firing so that we may stop killing each other with our minds?

****

Judy Belfield

PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

All I said was, sometimes I was afraid the furnace would explode. And that worry kept me awake, while the too-few hours allotted for sleep quickly evaporated. She didn't wince, or chuckle, or anything; she only asked if that was all. I told her no . . . it wasn't. She stared and waited. I squirmed inside, not wanting to tell the worst. So I said, sometimes I was afraid that someone would break in and beat me to a pulp--if I was lucky. She didn't react, but asked again if that was all. Too hastily, I said no, knowing I would have to tell the worst--would have to tell that too-absurd fear, the one that kept my back to the wall night after night, the one that kept waking me every time I heard a floorboard creak, the one that was too crazy. She stared and waited. I said it was really stupid. She waited. So I said, giggling, that sometimes I was afraid that someone in my family would suddenly crack in the middle of the night and decide to hack me to pieces with an ax--like Lizzie Borden, don't you know . . . giggle. Her control was amazing--I wondered if Laurel and Hardy could break her. "Anxiety," she said. "I have just the thing," she said, reaching into a desk drawer.

"How do you feel?" she asked later. I was coming out a molasses fog, brown and sweet. "Uh . . . ," I managed, sugar-eyed, cotton-tongued. She handed me a glass of water. I said, in a grogfog, "That hammer did the trick all right."

****

Lynne M. Gloeckner

A RAY OF HOPE

Those first few months were really tough. My newborn daughter seemed so helpless and fragile and already my spastic limbs were beginning to show signs of fatigue. As I would fumble with her diapers pins, I wondered if she could somehow sense my lack of coordination. Did she miss the warmth and safety of my arms when I had to put her into her bassinette to taxi her around the house?

The answer came one early morning as she burrowed down into my arms to nurse and I saw that secret smile and the knowing touch of her little hand on mine.

Those little hands kept my fumbling hands very busy indeed! Each new day brought new challenges to face. And each day brought Kerry, my little daughter, new and exciting things to explore.

Although Kerry's little world was brand new to her, challenge was not a new concept to me. Since birth I had had to cope with cerebral palsy. Cerebral palsy is a brain injury that can leave its victim with a wide variety of disabilities.

I felt fortunate it had only endowed me with a minimal speech defect and slight coordination problems. Luckily it had also given me the guts and spunk to pursue a normal life.

My brain may have been damaged so that my walking and speech were labored, but my heart and mind were alive and well. Like most women, I wanted a home and children. I was ready and willing to find ways to safely and wisely raise a child.

On November 26, 1972, my dream came true. I gave natural birth to a 5-pound, 14-ounce baby girl. The challenge had begun.

Kerry was a beautiful, bouncing, healthy child. Each day that I cared for her needs held a new possibility for growth and achievement for me. Just walking into her room was sunshine on the darkest winter morning. She seemed to radiate enthusiasm for getting the day underway.

Little did she know how difficult the tiny buttons and snaps could be. As I would slowly dress her, she would become impatient and begin to roll over or kick. It was then that I would begin all the nursery rhymes that we had practiced fervently. First she would coo and babble with me. Later she would pick out her favorite sounds and make them along with me. Soon we had accomplished not only the tiniest of buttons, but she had learned more sounds and a sense of rhythm. It also helped when I purchased diapers with snaps.

As soon as Kerry could crawl, she would be placed on the warm rug to make her way into the kitchen for breakfast. I would go on ahead of her, talking and singing to her continously. This way she would know that I was still with her and very much a part of her little world.

I tried to carry her as little as possible for fear that I might stumble with her in my arms. As she followed my voice, I would carefully prepare her breakfast so that she could be rewarded for her efforts.

Once I had placed Kerry in her high chair, we had a big job ahead of us. My spasticity caused my arms to jerk at times, so that catching the spoon to get a bite to eat was a challenge in itself. Thank God for infa-feeders. But eight years ago, it was the old spoon and dish method for us. Many a day we both wore towels around our necks, but Kerry never left the chair hungry. If my arm couldn't find its way to my little girl's mouth, my little girl's mouth became very adept at finding her way to the spoon.

The days were exciting! At times I would fall into bed totally exhausted from following her around. But the sense of satisfaction I received was what kept me going. As my daughter learned to crawl and later on to walk, I felt as if I were learning to experience these joys all over again.

Since my own speech was slurred, I was overjoyed when I could teach her to say words and later phrases with clarity. When she walked straight and tall without bumping into walls or falling flat on her face or bottom, I felt as if I were taking those straight and unlabored steps right with her.

And she grew and one day began to run, I could feel my heart welling up and bursting with excitement. Oh, how I had wanted to run as a child! Now a part of me was running and hopping, skipping and jumping.

And she grew! She ran and she jumped and she went off to school. It was then that the true test of love and understanding took place. Her secret smile and the knowing touch of her hand were no longer easy to come by. Kerry and I had to face up to the fact that as a preschooler Kerry had accepted me on blind faith.

Kerry had just assumed that all mommies fumble with the buttons on the back of your dress and that all mommies have trouble putting braids into your hair. She must have closed her eyes to the physical differences between other mothers and her own.

My heart broke the day she returned from first grade to announce that several of her classmates had told her mom was "different". Her eyes had been opened!

(continued)

I knew how cruel children could be and had heard their hurtful remarks as a child. I had attended school with normal children and had learned to deal with all their probing questions and stares. I was well aware of the openness and frankness with which children Kerry's age speak. It had not occurred to me that my own child, who was normal, would also have this to contend with.

I wanted to keep my child from this hurt, but I knew I could not. I only hoped that I had given her the character and inner resources to be open and honest about my disability and not taker her peers' inquisitiveness personally.

Those were rough times. Kerry cried her way through first grade. And so did I. The first two years of school were very difficult for both of us. Luckily my little girld was very bright. The inner turmoils which was in her little heart did not affect her mental ability to do we-l in school. Many a night we would cuddle up together on her bed and discuss something that had been said by a classmate.

When these remarks first began, my daughter rejected the idea that there could be any truth to what was being said. It was almost as if she had in her own mind measured things out and put me on an even keel with everyone else. She would turn angry if anyone even suggested that her mother "walked funny" or could not be easily understood. My heart ached for her but I could not change the facts. At times I even wondered if I had been fair to my child to place her in this predicament.

I found myself feeling rejected as I had as a child the day Kerry announced that she didn't want me to accompany her class on an outing. I knew why.

The following year saw great change in both of us. Kerry seemed to have grown an invisible coat of armor. Suddenly we always had a houseful of Kerry's friends. She seemed to bring them in droves to meet her mother. She seemed to need to make a point of saying things like, "This is my Mom. She can't help that she doesn't walk like we do."

Kerry was constantly defending me or perhaps apologizing that things weren't quite right. Usua-ly the children would ask more questions and I found myself the topic of many after-school snack sessions right in my own kitchen. As a handicapped mom I found all the extra attention rather disturbing at first. I had never had to talk about my disability in such minute detail. I found that as I talked openly and honestly with these children about myself I, too, gained an awareness and understanding of the whys and wherefores of the things I do. I also learned that children can appreciate another's hardships and courage if only they are aware of them.

Now Kerry is almost eight. She no longer needs that coat of armor. She is no longer my defense lawyer. Kerry has put things into perspective. Her young years as a child of a handicapped parent have made her aware that there are wide differences in people. Perhaps she is a bit more caring than a child of her young age should be. Kerry will find good in everyone.

But I can't help but think that I am on the road to success as I hear my beautiful daughter bound in after school saying, "This is my mom. She's handicapped but doesn't she do a great job?" and, "Oh yes, that's my little baby brother."

****

Shelbia Chandler

EXCUSES VS FACT

#1.
Ordinarily it wouldn't have happened
But the booze went to my head
I lost my inhibitions
And I would up in your bed
You looked into my eyes
And lit my body's fire
Pressed your lips to mine
And made me weak with desire

#2
Ordinarily it wouldn't have happened
But the martinis blew my mind
I needed someone to hold me
And you were all I could find
You put your arms across my shoulders
And as I gazed into your face
My topsy-turvy world
Tumbled into place

#3
Ordinarily it wouldn't have happened
But my head just wasn't right
And when you made your move on me
I had no strength to fight
My body screamed yes
Though my lips were saying no
I didn't want to argue
So I let my emotions go

#4
It would have happened anyway
Since I've loved you for so long
And any protest I may have made
Wouldn't have been too strong
So I'll give you no more excuses
I'll tell you no more lies
My heart began to melt
When I looked into your eyes

****

Tom Madai

PACING

Unhurriedly, a seed grows within:
Outside forces move at breakneck speed;
While intolerable pressures build.
A ruling ambiguity prevails, accelerating
to nowhere.
Emotional roughness exceeds the limits;
Peacefully, emergence begins.
Altered states conflict, threatening
mutual burnout--
Harried, frantic attempts to balance only
bring tempest;
Still, calmly, I grow, adapt, and awaken.
Detachment is my seed coat, bursting,
Soon to be thrown aside,
In favor of loving interaction.
A new perspective of unhurried, yet
rapid being
Has entered my awareness.
Massive, unponderous abilities at last
expand,
Becoming outwardly fulfilled,
Even as new talents are fostered.
My resolution from chaos proceeds apace,
Fueled by my essence.

****

Judy Belfield

PROCREATION

A new mother
counts toes
kisses palms
soft and small . . .

I stand in a cave in France
studying a prehistoric man,
his fingers outlined on the wall
five to a hand
like mine.
My soul contracts, shudders
silently gives birth,
as daylight sings a lullabye
and mother counts my toes.

****

John Q. Public

EIGHT IS NOT ENOUGH

Let me sleep,
Let me sleep
My life away.
I know that perhaps
I could change the world,
But I live for my sleep
Each and every day.
Keeping late hours,
Propping up the bar,
I feel spiritual
Taking life away w/my car.
Sooner or later
I must pay once more,
For the good times
And for being so bored.
So let me sleep,
let me sleep.
Life will go on without my contribution
Wake me after the next revolution.
I must look to the future,
I must be rested
To stay up through these
Depressing days.
With enough sleep
I may change my ways . . .

****

Charlotte Pennington

I AM A TEST-TUBE BABY

I am a test-tube baby
My mother was a slide
My life was made significant
--I never even tried.

My mother's name was Pyrex
My father's--Mr. Hyde
My lungs were filled at first breath
with the smell of formaldehyde.

Dr. Jeckel was the scientist
His work we all acclaim
I'm just a test-tube baby
It's my only claim to fame!

****

John Bertoletti

THE LITTLE PINKO

Shuffling over the rough terrain of the rug, the soldier is alert and ever-thinking as he scans his goal. Standing in front of a row of shelves he ponders his way to the top. After taking his rope out he makes a grest strike with it onto a bookend high above. In complete guerrila fashion he ascends the twine escalator to the second shelf. There, with nothing but a straight vertical climb facing him, he dons a quartet of suction cups and quickly straps them on. His spider-like movements are impeccable as he scales the wall toward his lofty destination. Once on the top shelf the suction cups go and the rifle appears. He stalks with great determination to the matter at hand. Approaching the blimp he is caught off-guard as the booming of

(continued)

heavy footsteps send him scurrying past the stereo to his passage downward. The sprint is in vain as a massive, callused hand snatches him viciously.

"Well, I'll be damned!!" says the fat man. "If it ain't a tiny man!"

The soldier's grave attempt at escape is worthless as the clutches grow tighter around his body. Swinging through the air in the hand causes him to lose all direction as he is brought into another room. Voices pound his ears: "I don't believe it!" exclaims the fat man's friend.

"Ain't he something! I caught him up on the shelves! Think he was--"

"Don't you know what you're holding?" blurts the friend. "He's one of those special Top Secret Projects that Russia's been working on!"

"A what?" asks the fat man.

"Yes! Yes! He's one of the tiny people they're shooting over. They pack them in these little capsules and send them over! It's called 'crawl-out.' The Feds have been on to it for awhile but none have actually turned up--at least none that I've heard of."

"Crawl-out? Jesus, that's incredible!" He holds the soldier up to his face in total bewilderment. The tiny man amazes him. He tries to squirm free to no avail.

"Is he human, though?! asks the fat man.

"From what I heard, yes--well, at least he is for the most part."

"But how in the hell do--"

"They've been doing research on genetics for years. Lately they've tied their findings in with test-tube babies and stuff like that. They've come up with some astonishing discoveries," the friend explained. "By isolating and manipulating the genes they can produce any kind of person they want."

"Well, I'll be damned," says the fat man, shaking his head as he watches the soldier's continued attempts at escape.

"You wouldn't belive what they can do to them," continued the friend. "They control their brains, too. They don't even need to brainwash them. They just sort of 'program' the genes and they'll act however the commies want them to."

"It's like goddamn human robots! Those bastard Communists! They're worse than I thought! When you start to tamper with humans--well, that's going too far!" cries the fat man, anger rising. The soldier is still now as the fat man's anger has tightened his grip.

"See," goes the friend, "you're squashing him up now, but that son-of-a-bitch is probably made to never give up or slow down or anything."

"And what about 'capsules'?"

"Right. They send them over in capsules. I think it's about 50 at a crack."

"But they're so small," says the fat man, staring at the tiny man. "What the hell good are they?"

"I guess they're spies. They can't be much good in the combat sense. This one was looking at the technology of your model Blimp, probably. They're after any information they can get. You know those damn Communists," he said.

"You're right about that!" yells the fat man, again beginning to fume. "And I hate 'em! They've gone too damn far!" As he yells, he shakes the soldier wildly.

"Hey, easy! Let's bring him to our scientists and see what they can do with him. Maybe they'll learn--"

"The hell we will! This ain't right! This one dies!" His look is crazed as he storms out of the room.

"Where are you going? Come back with him!"

"They've gone too far," he screams. "I don't like nosy Commies running around my house!" He heads down the basement stairs as his friend follows questioning.

"What are you gonna do? I think you're going too far!"

"I'm going as far as it takes to kill this--this--thing! TUis doesn't belong in this world! This is a freak--a freak of science!"

"So what's your plan?" asks the friend.

"How 'bout a bar-b-que!! I think I'll fry him right up."

Standing at his work bench, he locates thin wire in the botton drawer. He takes it with his free hand and hands it to his friend. "Here. Cut up some pieces to tie him up with."

He holds the bug-eyed soldier to his face and blows directly at him.

"Jesus. You'll kill him with your breath alone! You and your damn garlic omelettes!"

"Yea," laughs the fat man. "Look at his eyes water!"

"Here you go," says the friend after cutting the wires.

"Ok," says the fat man. "I'll hold him and you tie his arms and legs."

The fat man, while trying to move the soldier to the other hand, changes his grip. Preying on his only chance, the tiny Communist struggles away from under the fingers and flops like a fish on land. THe massive hands are unable to maintain their hold as the soldier drops to the bench.

"Son of a bitch!" screams the fat man. "Get him!" Flaying forearms grab nothing but air as the miniature commando skirts to the edge. Without hesitation he leaps onto the dusty cement floor, tumbling as he makes contact

(continued)

He sprints wildly along the wall board like a rat until a huge set of pliers crash into the wall in front of him.

"Oohh!" grunts the fat man. "I damn near got him there!" He heads for the soldier, who has switched direction. The movement of his legs is like that of a cartoon character.

"Jesus, he's quick!" exclaims the fat man.

"I'll get him here," says the friend as he grabs an old paint can. In a few fast leaps he nears the soldier and slams the empty can over him. A shower of dried paint casdades down on him.

"Good job," says the fat man. "We nearly lost him there. Get some cardboard." They slide a torn bear flat under the can, trapping the soldier. Together they carry the can to the work bench, preparing each other for the next step. "Now be careful when you turn it over."

"Keep that cardboard on there tight." They execute the move expertly.

"OK, pull her up," says the man with the massive, callused hand. "He can't climb out of here."

As the cardboard is removed, the speckled-white soldier jumps and jumps to reach the top. He cannot, but he keeps on trying.

"Hey Mister Crawl-Out!" taunts the fat man,. "Why aren't you crawling out now?"

"I'll go get some thread," says his friend. "We can tie him easier with that." He exits. The fat man continues to taunt the Communist.

"Hey, you're all dirty, stupid! Want me to clean you?" He promptly spits at the sprawling soldier. The spit misses but the fat man goes on.

"You're gonna be wishing that hit you--even if it does smell like garlic! You're gonna fry soon, Commie, just like my onelettes!"

The friend returns and quickly cuts and ties three lassoes.

"Here," he instructs, "one for each hand and the other around his legs. Let me get him this time." He reaches in and firmly grabs the soldier, making sure the legs are straight so the binding will be easy.

"Hold still," says the fat man. "I'll get the legs." Unable to kick, the soldier is at last helpless as the black thread tightens around his combat boots. The hands, though, are harder to bind. The soldier stubbornly keeps his arms at his sides and holds them there tightly. The fat man's fingers poked and grabbed at the arms until he finally broke the grip. They quickly placed the string around the tiny wrist and tugged. After securing the other arm the same way, they took more thread and bound the wrists together.

"I'll finish him up," the fat man said, "You get some sticks and leaves--and get my lighter too." His friend exits again as the fat man continues the binding process, enjoying every minute of it. He sat the bound soldier on the bench and placed an old jar of screws against his back to make him sit up. Another thread is tied from the neck to the ankles, making him sit up in an L-position. He pulls the serew jar away to see his finished work.

"Well, aren't you sitting pretty! You'll have a nice seat on the wall soon." His friend returns and begins to build the fire along the wallboard. He adds dry leaves and twigs until a nice pile is standing.

"Good, good," says the fat man. "Throw a little of that whiskey on there too."

With the fire ready to go, the fat man pounds an aluminum nail into the wall above the fire. He ties the soldier's arm strings onto it. The soldier hangs against the wall. His legs are perpendicular to it as the fat man exalts. "We're all set! Gimme the lighter." Taking it, he proudly proclaims, "Here's to the Russians," and lights the alcohol-soaked wood. The twigs catch fire rapidly and rising flames begin to lick away at the bottom of the Communist's legs. His eyes bulge as he helplessly burns.

"Hey-hey! Look at him go!" wails the fat man triumphantly. "Take those American flames right where it hurts!"

Gray, stinking, toxic smoke fills the air as his buttocks and legs burn away.

"Wow," says the friend, "that smoke really stinks!"

"Whaddaya expect? He's a damn stinking Russian!"

The soldier continues to Mburn as toxic smoke fills the air. The charred and mangled remains drip off the wall into a pile of cooked humanity.

"That's worse than your garlic! That's terrible!" says the friend, eyes watering.

The fat man's smile begins to fade while the soldier's torso skin curls and tiny major organs melt away. The men cough and gasp as they watch the flames do their work. Out of the corner of his eyes, the fat man sees his friend collapse to the ground. But he is unable to do anything as he himself blacks out and falls forward. His forehead smacks face down on the dusty cement floor and the massive, callused hand drops helplessly into the flames . . .

****

Lynne M. Gloeckner

LITTLE BOY BLUE

He was just a blue-blanketed bundle when brought him to me. A face of a china doll that squinted and winced and screwed itself up when introduced to the protruding rosebud of nourishment.

Little pools of chocolate melted my heart as I welcomed my first son into my life. His soft hand carressed my body as my mind conjured up images of baseballs, toads and leather jackets. "A boy! Tough as nails and full of the devil." Isn't that what they say?

Somehow the promise of manhood seems to be an unfathonable notion. My son nestles down and gives a silly grin as he burps with drunkenness while grasping my little finger for security. I try to envision the day when I will be looking up at him. Maybe looking for the protectiveness which he now enjoys.

Perhaps it is these tender moments between a mother and her infant son that makes the bulking size of a grown man so virile.

****

Marguerite Flanigan

MUSIC

Melody, harmony, rhythm
Doth not music make

The inner soul must enter
To make it soar

The artist paints a mood
A picture, a feeling

The melody is the basket he rides
On his way to ecstacy

The harmony is its roots
Its foundation, its core

The rhythm is its movement
The tempo its clock

The soul is within the artist
Who translates the elements to bliss

****

John Q. Public

BRIAN'S SONG

Guitar
Amplification
Noise
Neighbors/Complaints
Thumbs-Up/Determination
Long
Greasy
Hair/Headbands
Lucky break
Bar scnee
Connections
Three piece suit/Record exec.
Magic offer
$
Pen=Signature
Bigger guitar
Louder amplification
Purer noise
Foreign
Sportscar
Beautiful groupies
A Blonde/A mistake!
Debt
No sale potential
Tears
And
A new guitar star
On the way. . .

****

John Bertoletti

NOT MY BAG

Why don't flowers bloom in my garden?
Why do all my plants die?
I give them all the water they need
and all the sun from the sky
but all my roses wilt
and all my daisies brown.
They start up with a smile
but always die a frown.
I guess I'm not a gardener.
My thumb just isn't green.
The flowerbed is empty
the crop yield very lean.
But I don't give up easy
though the seasons have been hard.
Someday I'm gonna cultivate
a treasure in my yard.
It's gonna be fantastic.
A giant redwood tree
majestic, green, and towering
for everyone to see.
And when it's finally standing there
I'll relish in its shade
and give myself a pat on the back
for the wonderful thing I've made.

****

Jean Tyrell

DAY'S END

Pick me up, put me down. Hold me though,
hold me.

Take away my tiredness. Quell my achey
head.

Enfold me in your arms with a gentle hug.

Push away the weariness. Remove thoughts
of despair.

Keep self-pity out of my touch.

Just hold on to me some more.

****

Tom Madai

DREAMING AWAKE

I see thru me-colored glasses
As you will see for thee.
Reality is perspective
Built of our point ov view.
I send forth my ideals
Which ri[illegible]le an open surface,
Interpreted by your deeps.
My perceptions of not-me
Affect my thoughts of self,
Even as I create them
To work within my realm.
Your own concepts sally forth,
And interact with mine;
Yet no true perspective can
Show them to be the same.
Only by merging, retaining the carryover,
Shall we semantically agree.
Diversely different as snowflakes,
Definitely divine, we all
Create reality, as forces of will combine.

****

Anita Rutkowski

INTERNMENT

A cold tombstone,
carved gra[illegible]ite lamb;
the head is gone,
inscriptions fade.
A weathered picture
crumbled and decayed;
the babe's been at rest
for a hundred years today.

****

Judy Belfield

STILL THE MORNING IS MUCH TOO FAR

Cushion-haired
rest me there.
Feet curled under blankets
toes grazing your legs.
You pull away
from the cold thrum
turn over and over.

Pillow-head-soft
hide me there
in the warm irritation
of wake-up . . .

I'm afraid in this dark room.

A snore
a snarl
a "what now"--
not a question.

Nothing
nothing. . .
pull up the covers
and drown in your safe sleep
while my eyes
fight the night
and dragons.

****

Jody Wisman

MR. MOON MAN

Take me into orbit with you
Share oxygen between us two
I wanna sail through a cloud
To get away from this loud crowd.

Launch me Mr. Moon Man
I've got the space man craze
Let's ditch this nuclear age

See the lovely planets around
How does kissing in space sound?
To Venus or Mars
Or one of those stars
Launch me Mr. Moon Man

****

John Bertoletti

SOMETHING PEACEFUL

Swingin' on my vine,
listening to the beat.
Groovin' to the jungle sound.
Stayin' off my feet.
Keepin' cool beside a tree
Sucking coca leaves.
Tuning in to jungle jibe,
Jammin' on my reed.
See the monkeys on the branch
the parrots in the sky.
Just can't get enough of it
That mellow jungle high.
A flash of sunlight on my face,
it's life without a care.
The jungle sound goes sliding by,
the breeze blows through my hair.
Mellow is the music, yea,
inside my jungle hut.
Nothing beats the buzz of
cool, fermented coconut.
And the gentle waves move through me,
They make me so alive
Just livin' life the laid-back way
to easy jungle jibe.

****

Anita Rutkowski

EXPUNGE OBFUSCATION

Answer my questions,
straightforward, if you please.
Relieve me of all doubt,
set my mind at ease.
Rub out my queries,
don't make light just a tease.
Quickly expunge
or obfuscation will seize.

****

Judy Belfield

NECROPOLIS

All Caesar's legions
trampled on our dust
building the roads over us
so that we, too, might know the way to
Rome.

We did not follow their sandaled feet
to the Forum
but stayed to dance
on a flat fresco
of burnt red and dark-sun pigments
in a cool, silent tomb.

****

Judy Belfield

TERMINALS

Rooms attached
to labyrinthine corridors
attached like aphids to rose stems
as though the bloodstream halls
nourish its parasitic cubicles
and within the rooms
yet other parasites--
human leeches
stuck to beds
like suckers on a shark.

These, the least of brethren,
in varying states of decay
holding on for life
to silversleek starkwhite marvels
wheeling quietly
through the corridors
of phlegm and lost fluids
flushed into oblivion
until one day a door opens
into sunlight and the grave.

****

Shannamar

AWAY

Away
I take you
on a sailboat
drifting on waters
of crystal blue
off islands
with pure white
sandy beaches
in the warmth
of an endless sun
no sound
except the surf
and the soft caress
of the sea breeze
air fresh and clean
beneath skies
of purest blue
watching the fluffy
white clouds
move slowly past
as the boat
gently rocks
to the lullaby
of the sea
time
seems nonexistent
a foreign thought
that does not apply
as in a dream
I carry you away

****

JoAnne Kaseno

TRIPS

Loud music from the speakers.
into a world of colors and
visions and
love and
fear.

A sweet taste in my mouth.
I can smell
the dark brown
of his hair
and
see
the deep tones
of his voice.

Hot breath
of the walls
on my back.

Running
from
my
mind.

****

Tom Madai

CONVERGENCE

It puzzled us all at the start of the scheme;
Things as they are, are not as they seem.
Catch the tune of the infinite beat;
Follow it closely while moving your feet.

Note the music inside your head--
Listen for long and you'll not know you're dead.
Dance as you listen and start to sway;
Grope toward the light as they take you away.

You sit in your cell as the tune goes around;
Caught in its motion, you'll never be found.
Look in your whirlpool for traces of self,
Not even noting you were dumped on the shelf.

Check at the center for the presence of OM---
Maybe at last you've found your true home.
Move to the center to merge with the calm;
Successful arrival protects you from harm.

Navigate the hazards on your way to the node;
follow instructions and do as you're told.
Your destination is coming up soon--
Exclain with surprise that you're back in the womb!

Abandon your body--much is at stake;
Control of your new one you shortly must take.
Wipe clean the slate with extremely great skill--
Prepare for the new life you'll certainly feel.

****

Judy Belfield

CONTINUANCE

you and me
shot through with silver glitterdust--
like nymphs in the wood
hand to hand
dancing over ferngrass
toward orange skyribbons
in a distant blue . . .
you and me
riddled with years of each other--
like canyon and river
the etching of our lives
in rockstrata
traveling down and down
to the center . . .
you and me closed over by time--
like serfs
overwhelmed by the lord
forgotten under snow
in plowed-over crusty earth
the harvest long-since belched forth
and swallowed by hungry yesterdays. . .

****

Peggy Martino

MAGNETICS

Humanity reaches across the Universe
And yet
The Universe is forever
reaching for Humanity

****

Marguerite Flanigan

GOD'S FAVORITE COLORS

If the sky was made blue
It's God's favorite hue
And the grass had His choice
OF the color of green
He selected a yellow
For sun to be bright
So that all of the world
Could be seen in the light

With the brown of the earth
And the black of the trees
Then the flowers were made
With a violet shade
Mixed with gold red and pink
And a lavender too
All a rainbow of blends
Touched with silver of dew.

****

Lynne M. Gloeckner

PANNING FOR GOLD

My mind pours over my past like a musty prospector panning for gold. It drags over every memorable detail in search of a shiny moment which might promise a noteworthy reward.

The stream is knee deep. For my tides have hit the shores for many seasons. The water is murky and one must be a patient sifter to prospect in these muddy waters. Many pebbles have been formed in my stream with the passing of time.

A lifetime of remembrances await the silver pan's disturbance of their set ways. With each dip, my mind gently awakens the rocking horse that was in my nursery, smells of Grandma's spice cookies, and the feel of Daddy's lap when I was a tot. This is the wealth that lies in my brook.

Wading into shallow waters, I find gems that have not yet been refined by the currents. The jagged memory of a first love, the loss of a loved one to death, and other recent adult memories have not had the advantage of the tides of time. They have not lost their jaggedness and rough spots are painful to the sensitive mind.

Some of my precious metals are submerged deep in the sands and must be dug up. While others are sitting gently upon the sand. They catch the glistening light like the speckled salmon. Unlike the prospector, my mind has no need to trade my gems in for their monetary value. It just holds them up to shine in the sun; to toss them gently back into the waters to be panned again another day.

****

Anita Rutkowski

THETA CHI (DATE A GUY): FRATERNITY MEN

Kiss me, kiss me, I love you,
And I know you love me too.

Hold me, hold me, tighter please,
I like being your main squeeze.

Touch me, touch me . . . ecstasy,
never cease to fondle me.

Fricki, fricki, oh so fine,
need I give another line?

****

Sue Sturgeon

EATING RED BEANS AND RICE ON MONDAY

Eating red beans and rice on Monday
Drink a Dixie with a drunk
Pinch a tail. Suck a head
Eat lots of French pastries

Ride in horse drawn coaches
Party at Loyola and Tulane
Head down the French Quarter way
See 25¢ peep shows on Bourbon Street

Catching beads on Fat Tuesday
This port is no place for a monk
See a shotgun shed
Smell the magnolia trees

Amazed by them 4 inch roaches?
See the Mississippi drain
Driving across the swampy causeway
listening to the Cajun beat.

****

Shelbia Chandler

YOUR TEENAGE DAUGHTER

Your teenage daughter
Just beginning to bloom
Will grow a fine lady
If you just give her room.

Give her your love
And your complete trust
She may get hurt
But everyone must.

If you let her run her own life
She might get burned,
But if you try and run it for her
She'll never really learn.

Experience is the best teacher
But give her advice
And when she's

She knows you love her
You've already let her know-
Now just stand back
And let her grow.

****

John Q. Public

THE PARTY

Eyes glimmering w/sin
Waiting for our connection,
Our pass in.
Anticipating nothing, but wishing for bliss
Gliding past false bright smiles,
Silk and pre-formed hair.
Teenage depression journeys on.
Death games played w/no awareness,
Can freedom be found 'own these
Barren alleys of oblivion we roam?
Glasses in their hands.
Glares in their eyes.
Music masks the underlying meaning
Of existence at this place and time.
Reaching deep within one's soul,
Pleading w/others for approval.
Time glides--
Sexual plots thicken,
Both he and she acting out,
A role of self-inflated ego
Meaning and confusion
Climax.

****

Charlotte Pennington

OUTRAGE

How can you do that?
Doesn't it destroy your mind?
How can you stand the thought
of killing your own kind?

Dump the bodies into plastic bags
Infested remains wrapped in old dishrags
Smash a corpse with rifle butts,
Destroy its rotting flesh and guts.
Tears roll from its cringing eyes
for it will never greet
another stinking sunrise
or smell garbage in the street!

Flying high in your aircraft
Dropping bombs on little kids
you murdering bastards
don't care what you did.

****

Tom Madai

THE HUNTER/PRIESTESS RELATIONSHIP THROUGH THE AGES

Ritual and magic have played important roles in daily life since the inception of culture. Costume has played a crucial part in the actions which brought desired elements of the supernatural under man's control.

A particular case of this significance was the choice of clothing hunters donned in preparation for the hunt. Brightly colored beads, feathers and artistic daubs of paint comprised a pattern which attracted game and protected the wearer from harm. Women, too, dressed in suitable costume and chanted while dancing or gesticulating. Success in the hunt brought feasting and ceremonial dances in gratitude to the mysterious forces of nature.

As time passed, cultural values became more complicated and the forces were anthropomorphised--the gods were born! To appease this group of newborns, select members of the village grouped together to make sense of the gods' capricious behavior. Thus was born the clergy (and, possibly, politicians).

Gradually, as one generation gave way to the next, some of the mystery was taken from the "forces," and the clergy found themselves losing power. Another concurrent trend was the reduced need for many hunters ranging over large territories due to the advent of agriculture. This state of affairs gave certain individuals a bit of spare time; to counteract their boredom, various hunters became competitive amongst themselves. Since these contests often led to death or crippling due to the extreme violence involved, the village priests met to discuss the situation.

From that meeting evolved a way to greatly increase their power while simultaneously ridding the tribe of its undesirable elements. First, the clergy designated the most aggressive group of hunters to be members of a special class whose purpose was the defense of the village from outside attack. As symbols of this newly-conferred status, a special costume was created.

The next step was to give the new class a name--our equivalent of 'warrior' Since a neighboring village was sited near a rich game trail, the clergey decided to try to gain possession of it for themselves.

Accordingly, a special holy ceremony was held, during which the warriors were given a message direct from the gods (a priest pretending to be in a trance, possessed) to attack the village and take command. The feast lasted long into the night.

At dawn, the band of eager hunters began their trek, brimming over with the god-given directive to claim what was rightfully theirs. When they arrived at the enemy village, they attacked. Screaming in unison, the soldiers effectively destroyed the village. The surviving inhabitants were brought back to serve as slaves and gradually merged with the other group.

Thousands of years passed, with the warrior and clergy becoming ever more powerful. Cities grew, the gods were merged, and once again a group of people formed with some spare time. This was happening in several city-states at once, so an inter-city festival was held to discuss the situation. From

(continued)

observing the activities of the group in question, the idea of formalizing their games into a quasi-professional league was expressed and acted upon. Thus was born sport.

Centuries passed, during which athletes became more sophisticated, formalizing the rules, regulations and ethics of sport. Through the superficial changes, however, there still glimmered their origins as hunter-warriors. An image of masculinity evolved which idealized physical qualities and stoicism while relegating the other traits to women.

Coming into the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, women began to find ways of expressing themselves within the context of the arena; they became cheerleaders! Thus the degeneration of warrior/priest into athlete and the priestess into cheerleader has been traced.

The cheers used are analogous to the spells and prayers chanted in support of the hunters/team, while their uniforms and routines correspond to the costume and dance elements of ritual.

****

Judy Belfield

WHAT THIS AINT

This aint no poem.
Aint no fancy words in my head
so there sure aint gonna be none on this paper.

Looks like a poem, though--
that's cause people're perdictable,
see things that aint really there.
So . . . this might look like something
you think you reckanize
but it aint what you think.
Worry about that.
This aint no monolog neither--
I aint no Johnny Carson
an I aint got no golf club
an I aint gonna say how cold was it.

So what is this?
It sure aint for eyes to read
nor ears to hear.
Mebbe there's something sneakin through the words,
some secret somethin slitherin like a sn--
Nope!
I aint gonna say it,
cause you was expectin it--
an one thing I learned early on
before I could read an write
was things aint never what we think.
An even when they are
it's only cause we think they are . . .
cause we see things
that aint really there.

So . . . what is this?
Well, it aint no poem.
An I could say too
that it aint no chicken
an it aint no tractor.
I could say lotsa aints
but I aint gonna . . .

****

John Q. Public

THINK OF ME

You have seen ambers
The clues, the path
To uncover your destiny
But what is the sum of one alone
Who are you without someone
Do you want something--you know you do
Will you ask--I think not
Gaze into the sun, trigger on your gun
You're the only one that matters
To you . . .

****

John Bertoletti

WRITING BUMMED

Don't know why I get my hopes up.
It only makes it worse.
The depression of my silent phone
makes me break out in verse.
I write my painful feelings,
My hurt appears in ink.
It takes the worry off my chest
and makes my problems shrink.

****

Robert Costello

TITUS THE TITANIC

Titus, a two-headed reptilian behemoth, lived with his Mom and Dad in the middle of Murphy's Marsh on the east edge of Whoopdoop County.

Though his family and friends showered him with love and smothered him with affection, Titus was not happy. This was

(continued)

mostly due to one simple, unhappy truth. Everybody he knew or had ever heard of was a regular, one-headed, reptilian behemoth. Not an unregular, two-headed, reptilian behemoth, like himself.

"Look on the brighter side," his Mother was fond of suggesting. "Everything always works out just fine. Be happy," she told him.

It was true, he supposed. He had never met anyone other than himself who could sing a melody and a harmony at the same time while in the shower. (Or out of the shower, for that matter) Or accompany a vocal rendition of 'The Rocky Road To Dublin' simultaneously on cornet. Also, he could execute his favorite concerto; one of the ones in D Major for guitar and viola . . . or any one of a number of pieces written for two mandolins--even when he was home alone.

Nonetheless, as soon as Titus would cheer his sagging spirits with the thought of some advantageous aspect of possessing a second head, he would be reminded of some unpleasantness he had to endure.

He spent twice the usual time with his dental hygienist. "Titus," she would say, "you are, without question, the finest first base umpire in Whoopdoop." Titus would manage a small smile. He realized she meant well. "You never suffer stiffness after watching the tennis championships," She would go on like that, trying to help him. "Look on the brighter side," she would say.

Alas, Titus spent much of his time dreaming an impossible dream. He dreamed that: a)one of his heads would fall, or b) a substantial percentage of the population would sprout a second head.

Oh how miserable Titus felt. He longed to be something he was not.

Sometimes, when he thought of one of his heads falling off, he would argue loudly with himself about which head should go. Once, an argument got so out of hand, Titus had to be resuscitated after he throttled himself unconscious.

Another time, a well-meaning Uncle brought Titus a magazine article that told about a scientist who could help troubled beasties. "Maybe he can help you Titus," said the well-meaning uncle.

The scientist had ointments and elixirs for Titus to use. The scientist had a machine for Titus to sit inside. The machine changed Titus into a different creature every time he got inside. But it would not turn Titus into a regular, one-headed, reptilian behemoth. Once, Titus emerged from the contraption with only one head. Unfortunately, it was attached to two bodies. That was the last straw. No more scientists. Titus demanded his money back and went home.

After awhile, Titus decided he would become an explorer. He felt he was wasting his time. "I'm tired of wasting my days and nights sitting in front of the TV," he announced to himself. "Yes. It seems as though I am forever drinking Kool-Ade and eating tortilla crisps. I'm going to become an explorer," he added.

Titus was very pleased with himself. "I'll wear a uniform!" he said to himself. "Right. No more arguments over cowboy hats and sneakers, baseball caps or boots," he added gleefully. "My life will have purpose and direction," he mused. "I'm so happy," he added.

"I will have to agree with myself, in order to get the job done. Perhaps I'll meet aliens as strange as me. Maybe stranger," he added.

"Gadzooks!" he exclaimed as he looked himself square in the eyes. "I'm agreeing with myself already!" With that he ran happily off, hugging and kissing himself, and chattering two miles a minute.

So Titus got on a spaceship and blasted off to a life of adventure and exploration. He travelled hither and yon. He soon forgot he had ever felt sad or lonesome or unfulfilled. He became quite famous, and was usually at home only for seasonal holidays or important family hooplas. Or to receive an award. It was on just such an occasion his Mom handed Titus a letter that had arrived for him months earlier.

Titus read the letter. (He was used to fan mail by now) The letter smelled like lilacs, a favorite with Titus, and was from some sweet young reptilian behemoth on the other side of Whoopdoop. Well, Titus thought, she sounds real nice. It's obvious she paid close attention in school. Her penmanship alone is evidence to that. Oh, but just wait until she finds out I've got two heads. Ha! She won't know which face to laugh in first. Then Titus noticed something else. A picture was peeking out of the envelope. Golly, she sure is purty, thought Titus as he pulled the picture out for a better look. Titus could not belive his four eyeballs! Not just another pretty face. No sir-ee Bob ! Bubbling borscht buckets if it wasn't TWO pretty faces! She was a girlie two-headed reptilian behemoth!

Titus charged into the house, scooped up his Mom and Dad and began dancing around the room with the two of them, jumping and hollering, kissing them both at the same time. "Call the preacher, I'm in love! I'm going to the other side of Whoopdoop to collect the girl of my dreams." Then he was gone like a shot. Catching their breath, his bewildered parents saw the picture floating to the floor amid the whirlwind left in the wake of their jubilant child.

(continued)

Titus The Titanic, continued

They smiled, they kissed, they told one another how happy they were for each other and for their Titus.

Titus's Mom got dreamy-eyed and remembered long, long ago, when Titus was a tiny baby. How she had prayed and prayed that happiness would come to her baby. She remembered how she whispered to Baby Titus over and over again as she rocked him in her loving arms: "Don't worry little darling, everything always works out just fine. Always."

****

Peggy Martino

LIFE IN A GLASS

Of time we see our present
Filtering through a glass to the past
But from there where do we go?
Are we just destined to be turned endlessly?
Our sands to be forever mixing and mingling?
It almost seemes inevitable
Our sands get mixed and forget their origin.
They don't realize all that's happened,
during their churning experiences.
They can only see the present
and from experience, see what their future destination is to be.
They forget their past--
The knowledge of it happening is with them;
but does it really inhabit their memories?
All the affection they've felt is gone;
but does the remembrance still linger on?
Then one day their emotions take hold
All their feelings come into view.
Some even hand out their feelings.
Others get involved with our sands.
Some may question us;
Some may ask us to question ourselves.
But none are corrupt--unless we let them.
If our sands take the endless turning in stride,
and allow feelings to freely flow in and out,
and don't allow the forever churning to get in their way--
You glass will always be there.
It will serve as protector, shield and friend,
but will it not stand in the way of the sand's expansion?
On the other hand--
If your sands have a problem accepting the endless turning,
and can't allow feelings to flow the least bit freely,
and their forever churning becomes an obstacle--
Your glass will always be there.
It will serve as opponent, deceiver and foe.
An obstacle, will be the glass,
that will take pain and time to cut through.
At the end of the hour, the sands,
the last lingering ones,
trickle slwoly, patiently, tranquil
to their destination.
Then at some time, somewhere,
the glass is again turned and the sands again
begin their chnnning rotation for another hour.

****

Jody Wisman

LIFE CAN BE LIKENED TO A GARMENT

God cuts the pattern pieces and places them in our hands. His wisdom and grace helps us select the material. It is up to us to do the basting, fitting, and to try to sew good, strong, straight seams. We apply the finishing touches and hold up the completed garment for God's approval.

The world will judge quickly what they see with the naked eye, but only God knows what our darts and tucks conceal and how many seams have been ripped apart to be resewn. May we ask a blessing for those who never got past the basting stage, but only their pattern pieces remain to acknowledge the world that they were here.

The material is the quality of our parents. The basting is our environment and childhood. The fitting is our puberty and experiences of adjusting to life. The seams are our decisions and deeds in adulthood. The finishing touches are righted wrongs with God's good grace.

****

John Bettoletti

GREAT GIFT

I want my Julie for Christmas.
There's nothing I want more.
Having her back in my life again
Would make my spirits soar.

Cause I'm really lonely without her.
And lately I've been pretty down.
I'd really enjoy this Christmas time
If I could just have her around.

So c'mon, Santa, please have a heart--
After all, it's the time of good will!!
Tell me you'll bring me my Julie back!
Please, Santa, please say you will!

This isn't some brainstorm out of the blue.
I've wished it for quite some time.
Baby-dolls aren't reserved for the kids!
Please won't you bring me back mine!!

****

Shelbia Changler

BABY LOOK INTO MY EYES

Baby, look into my eyes
And maybe then you'll realize
That there'll never be another place or
time
Where you'll find a love so true as mine.
I know I'm young, but not so naive
What I'm saying you must believe
Age is only a state of mind
And years from now you will find
That my love remains constant and true
My heart will always belong to you.

****

Joanne Kaseno

There's this dude
And one day
He walks in his house
And
Everybody's all
Shook up
And
Crying.
He sees his
Best frined
And
Walks up to him
And asks
What's wrong.
But he just
Keeps crying
And
Doesn't answer
And
This dude
Figures he's too
Busted up
To talk about it
So
He sits down
And waits
For someone
To tell him
What's
Going
On.
After awhile
His grandmother
Comes up
And
Taps
Him
On the shoulder.
He looks
And says,
"What are you doing here Grandmother?
You're dead."
"So are you," she tells him.

****

John Bertoletti

DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN WE WERE TOGETHER

Remember--
How we were a sky?
How we loved the stars
And the moon so high?
When--
We were a love song?
A beautiful hymn, with
Romantic lines and phrases within?
We--
were together as one?
A carefree part full of
laughter and fun?
Were--
We not sunshine?
were we not love, that lived
under colors of rainbows above?
Together--
To live, to love, to be free,
When I had you and you had me,
To enjoy each other forever and ever.
Do you remember when we were together?

****

Jody Wisman

RESTLESS LOVER

Oh my restless lover
Whispering softly in my ear
Wandering mind so far away
What is it that you fear?

Restless breath upon my lips
Keep stirring me inside
Restless hands caressing me
What have they come to hide?

Oh my restless lover
You'll leave me soon I know
So pack my heart and soul once more
Just take my love and go

Oh my restless lover
Search this world I pray
And when you find your peace of mind
Come back to me and stay

****

Sue Sturgeon

INSEPARABLE COMPANION

We came into the world in unison,
an accident in nature.
We communicate, but we don't
use words.
Everyday of my life has been
spent looking into a mirror.
I can't imagine my life
without you, my shadow.

****

JoAnne Kaseno

WALK WITH ME

Walk with me
into the cool night
where the music
always plays and
the mind
journeys through light & vision &
the beginnings of creation.

You and I are the soul of the past
You are the image
and
I am the thought.

We fall deeper & deeper--
minds locked.

If only we could touch.

****

Len Overcash

MARRIAGE

When two are one and one
is two
When silence
is understanding
When distance
is close
When physical
is spiritual
When love
is weakness
When weakness
is strength
When solitude
is shared
When separate
is united
When two are one

****

Marguerite Flanigan

HELLO HAPPINESS

Hello happiness! Where are you?
Jump down here and stay awhile.

Forget whre I live?
Can't find my address?

Take off your shoes.
Relax and recline.
Find a spot for your coat.
Park for a while.

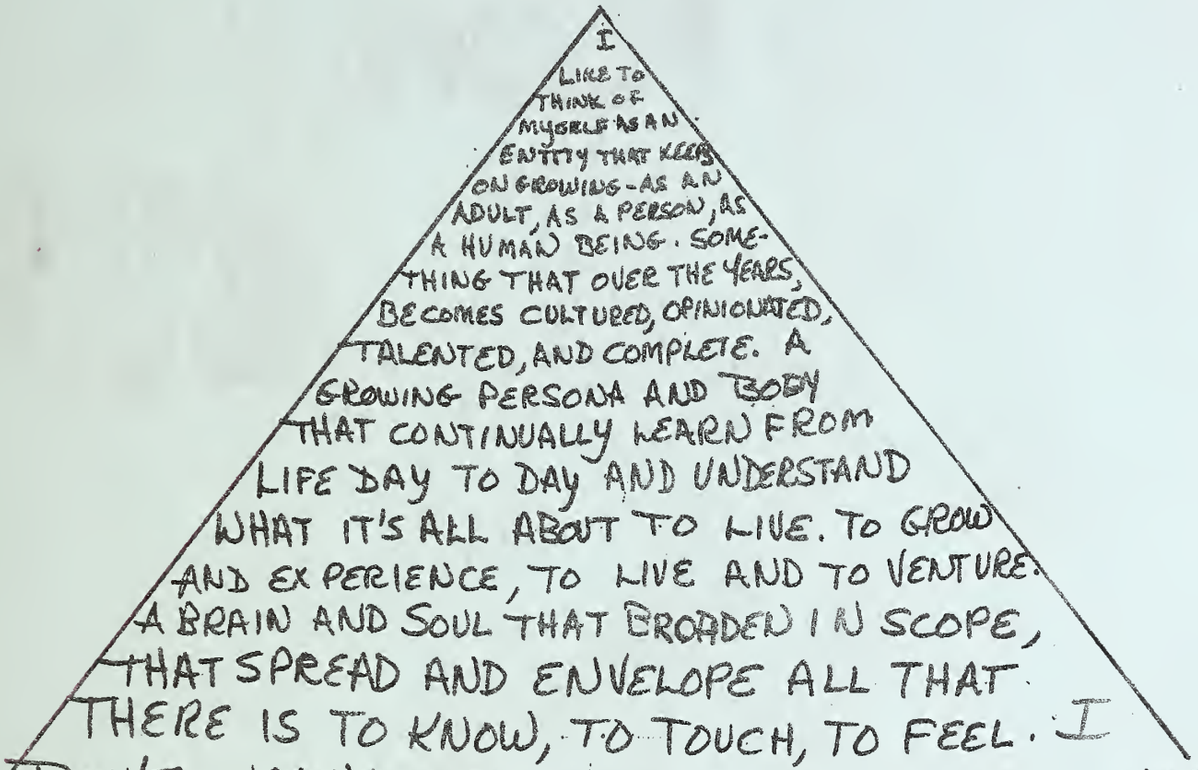
It's time for some joy.
You'll find me home.

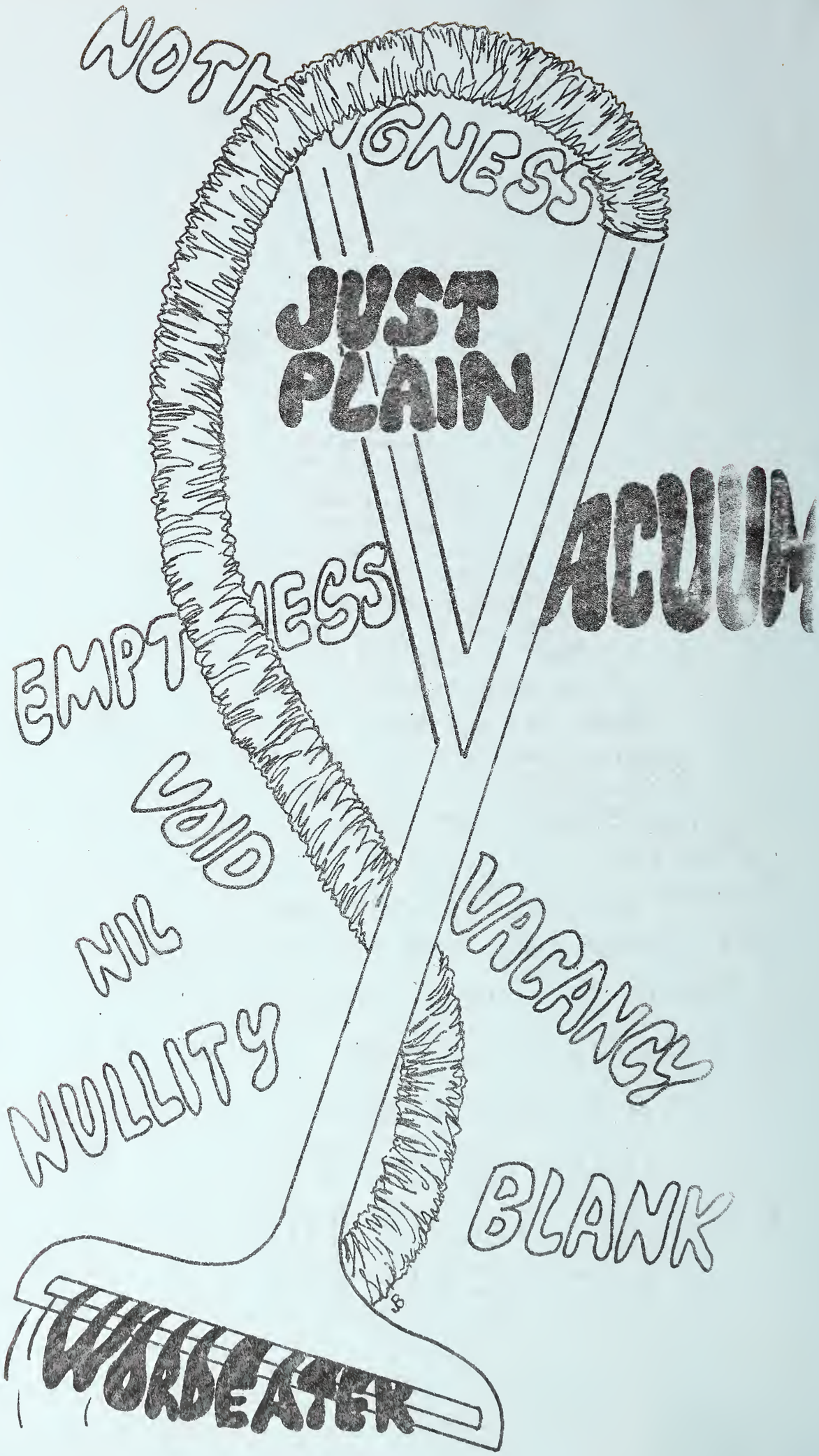
Hello Happiness! Where are you?
Jump down here and stay awhile.

****

John Bertoletti

I LIKE TO THINK OF MYSELF




NOTHINGNESS
JUST PLAIN
EMPTINESS
VACUUM
VOID
NIL
NULLITY
VACANCY
BLANK
WORDEATER